

# CSCE NEWS RELEASE

## Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

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## Croatia Subject of Commission Briefing

**For Immediate Release  
March 11, 1997**

**Contact: Chadwick R. Gore  
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**Washington, DC**—The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe announces a forthcoming briefing:

### **The Prospects for Elections, Reintegration and Democratization in Croatia**

**11:00 am - 12:30 pm**

**Friday, March 21, 1997**

**Room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building,**

**Washington, DC**

**Open to the Public and Press**

Scheduled to appear are:

**Vesna Pusic, Ph.D.**, Professor of Sociology, University of Zagreb, and Wiegand Visiting Professor, Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University. She is also the director of the Erasmus Guild, a civic organization promoting democracy and dialogue, and a member of the editorial board of the journal, *Erasmus*.

**Milbert Shin**, an Attorney with Human Rights Watch. Shin has just returned from several weeks in Eastern Slavonia—the remaining Serb-held region of Croatia—which has been under United Nations

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The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe by law monitors and encourages progress in implementing the provisions of the Helsinki Accords. The Commission, created in 1976, is made up of nine Senators, nine Representatives and one official each from the Departments of State, Commerce and Defense. For more information about the Commission, please call (202) 225-1901.

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administration and is to be reintegrated into the country later this year. Mr. Shin previously served with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Cambodia, and undertook a mission for Human Rights Watch in Tadjikistan.

**Jonas Rolett**, Senior Program Manager for East-Central Europe, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). NDI is undertaking a pre-election assessment mission in Croatia and implementing projects there regarding political party development, voter education and domestic election monitoring. Mr. Rolett previously served as NDI's first field representative in Albania.

**Nenad Porges**, Minister Counselor and Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Republic of Croatia. Mr. Porges previously served as Advisor to the Prime Minister of Croatia, as Deputy Minister of Economy, and from 1974 to 1993 was with the Center for Marketing Research in Zagreb. He was a Board Member of Croatian Shipbuilding Inc., Telecommunications Council, and President, Board of the Croatian Office for Noncommercial Export Risk Insurance.

**Background:** On April 13, Croatia will hold multi-party elections for municipal and regional authorities and for the House of Counties, Croatia's upper parliamentary chamber. The election will set the stage for a presidential election later this year, which will have implications for both Croatia's future and U.S. foreign policy.

Since its first multi-party election in April 1990, Croatia has emerged from the former Yugoslavia as an independent state, but only after participating in a tragic conflict which left substantial portions of its territory occupied by Croatian Serb rebels supported by the Yugoslav military, thousands dead, and many more thousands displaced. All but one occupied area, Eastern Slavonia, was retaken by force in 1995, and the success of the April 1997 elections will be the key to the peaceful reintegration of that area, currently administered by the United Nations, into Croatia without another mass exodus of Serbs.

The elections will also be a test of Croatia's democratic development, which has been criticized generally as much too slow for a country with west European traditions, even taking into account regional tensions and conflict. Indeed, the ruling party for the last seven years has been accused of contributing to these regional problems, including in neighboring Bosnia-Herzegovina, and of restricting the media and other independent activity that threaten its power.